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FURBY –
The Next Collectible?

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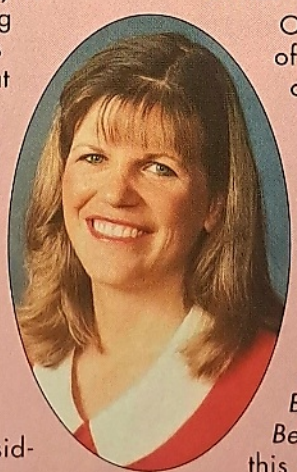
Furby Special Edition

Mary Beth's Beanie World Monthly is proud to present yet another exciting special edition! This issue celebrates the amazing Furby phenomenon that started during the 1998 holiday season. In this 48-page issue you will find everything you need to know about the hottest toy for 1999, including exclusive feature stories and full-page photos of all the versions of these fascinating toys. Also featured is our look at several new Furby-related products and tons of tips and tricks for playing with the interactive animatronic Furbies. You won't find all of this insider information anywhere else!



The articles in this issue provide unique perspectives on the so-called "Furby Frenzy," including an analysis of how the toy line was launched by Tiger Electronics and a history of the company. Also inside you will find a retailer's point of view, so you can see what it's like to be sitting on the other side of the toy store counter when it comes to Furby.

Of course, along with the fantastic photos of the fun-loving Furbies we provide photos of people just like you having fun with these great new toys. And we couldn't forget our real-life pets, many of whom are as fascinated with Furbies as we are!

Like our recent 1999 Beanie World Ultimate Buyer's Guide and Beanie Buddies Special Edition, this Furby Special Edition is designated for sale only at retail outlets. Subscribers to *Mary Beth's Beanie World Monthly* and/or *Mary Beth's Beanie World For Kids* will not receive this special edition by mail, and it will not count against the number of regular issues a subscriber has paid to receive.

Happy reading, and we hope you enjoy this special issue!

Mary Beth Sobolewski
Editor In Chief

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I will KEEP AMAZING you!
ELECTRONIC Furby
The more you PLAY with me the MORE I do!
I will KEEP AMAZING you!
ELECTRONIC Furby
WARNING:
The more you PLAY with me the MORE I do!
I will KEEP AMAZING you!
ELECTRONIC Furby
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WARNING:
The more you PLAY with me the MORE I do!
I will KEEP AMAZING you!
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The more you PLAY with me the MORE I do!
I will KEEP AMAZING you!
ELECTRONIC Furby
WARNING: CHOKING HAZARD - SMALL PARTS. NOT FOR CHILDREN UNDER 3 YEARS.

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How Furby Came To Be

Teddy RuxPin's Got Nothing on This Guy!

BY ERIN BRERETON

Wading through a world of painted-on smiles and puffy stuffed animals, Dave Hampton had a vision: create a toy that was realistic — more pet than plaything and more friendly than a bag of beans. Hampton wanted to make a toy that felt alive, or, was, as he told the Chicago Tribune, "a little guy who can be my friend."

It was a simple idea. Give kids more than just something to play with — give something that will play with them. Make a toy that could talk, giggle, learn, converse. Make it compact, distribute it everywhere and have it be affordable.

It was a simple idea. Give kids more than just something to play with — give something that will play with them.

Because once upon a time, there was a land full of toys who just sat there. Toys that didn't play, or talk back, or blink or gurgle. Toys that didn't sense when you were near, or know special games. Some of these toys took batteries, but their little motors only produced small movement or let the toys speak simple phrases.

Hampton was out to change all that. Which he did, with the birth of Furby — toy, friend, act of marketing genius and the bundle of fur and plastic toy enthusiasts are saying has changed the toy industry forever.

The Beginning

Furby was conceived in February 1997. The creator was freelance toy designer Hampton, a 46-year-old California-born inventor who broke from Mattel in the early '90s to pursue individual projects. After years of working on various technological devices and toys, Hampton's dream doll went from a vision to widespread product distribution within 18 months — thanks to a touch of brilliance, a heap of hard work and Hampton's unwavering determination.

His overall idea to construct an interactive toy marked the start of what would become the toy of

Associated Press Photo

Puppeteer Greg Ballora, left, consults with Furby co-inventor Caleb Chung as he makes a last-minute adjustment to his creation before the toy is unveiled to the public.

the 1998 holiday season and undoubtedly, the most talked about toy of the whole year. After seeing virtual pets for the first time, Hampton became inspired to improve upon the idea. He began working on prototypes and asked toy designer Caleb Chung, a former comedian who had consulted with Hampton on Microsoft's animated Barney character, to join him in the project. Chung agreed, and the two men set out to build a better best friend, complete with a personality and a reasonable price. Hampton chipped away at Furby's design and Chung tinkered with the mechanics for months.

FURBY FINDS TIGER

The first few manufacturers Chung and Hampton showed Furby to weren't interested. Production was stalemated until toy designer Richard Levy recommended the modest computerized toy maker Tiger Electronics, a company based in Vernon Hills, Illinois, that had rushed Giga Pets to the market the year before. Tiger had also helmed electronic gadgets like Brain Warp, Lazer Tag and Talkboy, the voice-altering device featured in "Home Alone 2: Lost in New York." He was certain the toymaker would embrace Furby and hurry it to the toy market.

It seemed like a perfect match: The maker of the interactive pet meets the maker of the interactive pal. And it was. When Hampton and Chung were introduced in a Los Angeles hotel room to Roger Shiffman, the president and one of the founding fathers of Tiger Electronics, Shiffman loved Furby. On November 23, 1997, Furby's two fathers signed a contract with Tiger to produce a finished prototype. Furby fit right into the Tiger family.

"We've been very lucky to pick a few winners," Shiffman told the Naples Daily News. "Because we don't have the layers and layers of organization that big toy companies have, we've been able to move quickly to develop products on our own or meet with outside creators to see new

Roger Shiffman is president of Tiger Electronics, the maker of toys including Furby and Giga Pets.

Associated Press Photo

innovations."

Which is exactly how Furby came to be. But by December, Chung had left the project. According to Jeff Jones, vice president of marketing for Tiger Electronics, Chung stepped back to help Furby's production.

"(Chung) turned the project over to a mechanical side team," he said. "He was responsible for designing a mechanism. It came to a point where he and Tiger realized we needed additional help and had to bring in a hired gun for the mechanism. He conceptualized a very excellent mechanism, but when it came time to make it for a manufacturer, there are inevitably some hiccups in the process. "

Levy, who had initially paired the Furby team with Tiger, stepped in to head the group of mechanics. He recruited some toy designers, a puppeteer and machinists, among others, to help finish Furby.

"Mr. Levy knew who to get when it came time to bring in hired guns. He's been a toy inventor for a long time," Jones said. "He knew the people we needed to make it happen."

Time was tight to produce a finished Furby prototype, but Team Furby wouldn't quit.

More than 2,500 Furby toys went on sale on the day after Thanksgiving at Universal Studios Florida, but they didn't last long.

Associated Press Photo

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"Furby became the No.1 priority," Levy told the Chicago Tribune. "I ate, drank and slept Furby."

Tiger, Meet Hasbro

Working out of a stained-glass workshop in Maryland, the team completed the sample Furby just in time for the annual eight-day Toy Fair festival held in New York, a meeting ground for toy makers and toy sellers.

When toy heavyweight Hasbro suddenly acquired Tiger Electronics for $335 million dollars, Furby production was put into warp speed. The move, Jones said, came as a surprise to almost everyone.

"Less than five people at Tiger knew," he said. "We were told we were going to be acquired by Hasbro the night before Toy Fair opened in New York in February (1998)."

The Furby team had flown to New York to promote Furby to the media and buyers at the annual trade show, and the news came as a surprise. Still, there was little time to think about it — Furby was posed to take over the toy world.

"We had a good indication (of success) at Toy Fair," said Lana Simon, director of public relations and promotions for Tiger. "The prototype, doing 5 percent of what Furby is capable of, blew people away. Buyers and media were excited."

Toy Fair can really boost a product's sales, Jones said.

"Wal-Mart committed to a significant percentage of our total output literally almost just based on what we showed them at Toy Fair," he said. "They don't make proclamations like that — they're notorious for controlling their business."

Early signs of the Furby craze were evident all over Toy Fair, where everyone wanted to learn a little Furbish.

"I was riding to La Guardia airport in a cab with one of my colleagues, and he leaned over and said to me, 'How does it feel to have the hit of Toy Fair?,'" Jones said. "I'm sitting there in my semi-dazed state after the whirlwind of Toy Fair, and I responded, 'It feels good people responded so well, but until it sells well to consumers, we don't have a product.'"

But at that point, Jones didn't count on Furby's immense success.

"You can't judge a potential success of a product just on Toy Fair. With all the hype and showrooms and the whirlwind atmosphere, on top of which you're in New York, you can easily get caught up in the moment," Jones said. "Then (buyers) get back to their offices and cooler heads prevail. That's when the real barometer starts."

Alfred Verrecchia, president of global operations for Hasbro Inc., talks with Roger Shiffman, co-founder of Tiger Electronics. Tiger is a division of toy giant Hasbro, which purchased Tiger to become a leader in electronic toys and compete with Mattel.

Associated Press Photo

"One of my colleagues he leaned over and said, 'How does it feel to have the hit of the Toy Fair?'" – Jeff Jones, Tiger Electronics' V. P. of Marketing

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The media and retail industry weren't the only people meeting Furby at Toy Fair — when Hasbro's CEO and Chairman Alan Hassenfeld arrived at the toy show to view Tiger Electronics' creation, Furby officially became a part of Hasbro.

"In some ways, it sped Furby along, but that didn't happen until later," Jones said. "Being part of Hasbro meant we had access to the Hasbro model shop, and they turned out to be critical in the making of the mechanism. So it turned out to be beneficial to Furby that were we were acquired."

The Finishing Touches

The toy market may have been feeling the first pangs of Furby frenzy, but in reality, Furby wasn't finished. A significant amount of work still needed to be done, so Charlie Caberry, director of Hasbro Model Shop in Rhode Island, and his experts began refinement in the development of the mechanisms.

The new team included Levy's recruits and Model Shop workers, about 15-20 people total. Before the tools were made, they made prototype drawings and software programs, they tested new parts and tried out motor characteristics.

"The Model Shop was very instrumental in solving the mechanical problems in final development," Jones said. "They were drafted into participating in the project around March. Tooling started sort of over a period of time. We're very famous for quoting November 23 as the project start date, but the tooling started to be done in mid-April to May 1998."

He may have had the moves down, but Furby still had yet to speak. Auditions were held for the voice of Furby, and freelance voice-over actor Tony Pope was selected. The distinctive Furbish-squeal was actually tweaked together through a four-hour, long-distance studio conference call between Tony Pope, Dave Hampton, Senior Vice President of Marketing for Tiger Electronics Stewart Sims, Jones and the studio sound engineer.

Associated Press Photo

Tiger Electronics representative Christine Nightingale shows off a new Furby in early 1998 at the International Toy Fair in New York. The toy would later become the most coveted gift of the 1998 holiday season.

The Chicago Tribune reported production began in four factories in southern China in late summer. And by the time Furby found himself back in New York for his grand arrival at the flagship FAO Schwarz store in early October, Jones had come around to the idea Furby might just be the hit of the holiday season.`

Associated Press Photo

A National Park Service Ranger gives a giant Furby a once-over near New York Harbor. The mammoth Furby was unveiled as part of Tiger Electronics' promotional push for the hot animatronic toy.

"The line of customers stretched down the street and the event was covered by almost every major media outlet in America — plus some other countries," Jones said. In the time between the first and second day Furby was at the New York FAO, Tiger's orders doubled.

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The Debut

New York advertising agency Posnick & Kolker had worked with Tiger Electronics on a commercial geared toward girls only, but that was changed to include a broader audience as Furby developed. But the response to Furby was so overwhelming Tiger dropped most of its advertising campaign. A TV commercial featuring kids playing with Furby aired for only a couple of weeks was shelved; print campaigns were pulled. Except for a brief teaser campaign run before the FAO opening, Furby seemed to sell itself. Rather than advertise for empty shelves, Tiger thought it best to take a low-key approach.

"We've actually pulled all of our advertising that was planned because our in-stock position was so limited," Jones said. He said the ad campaign will start again "as soon as it's required."

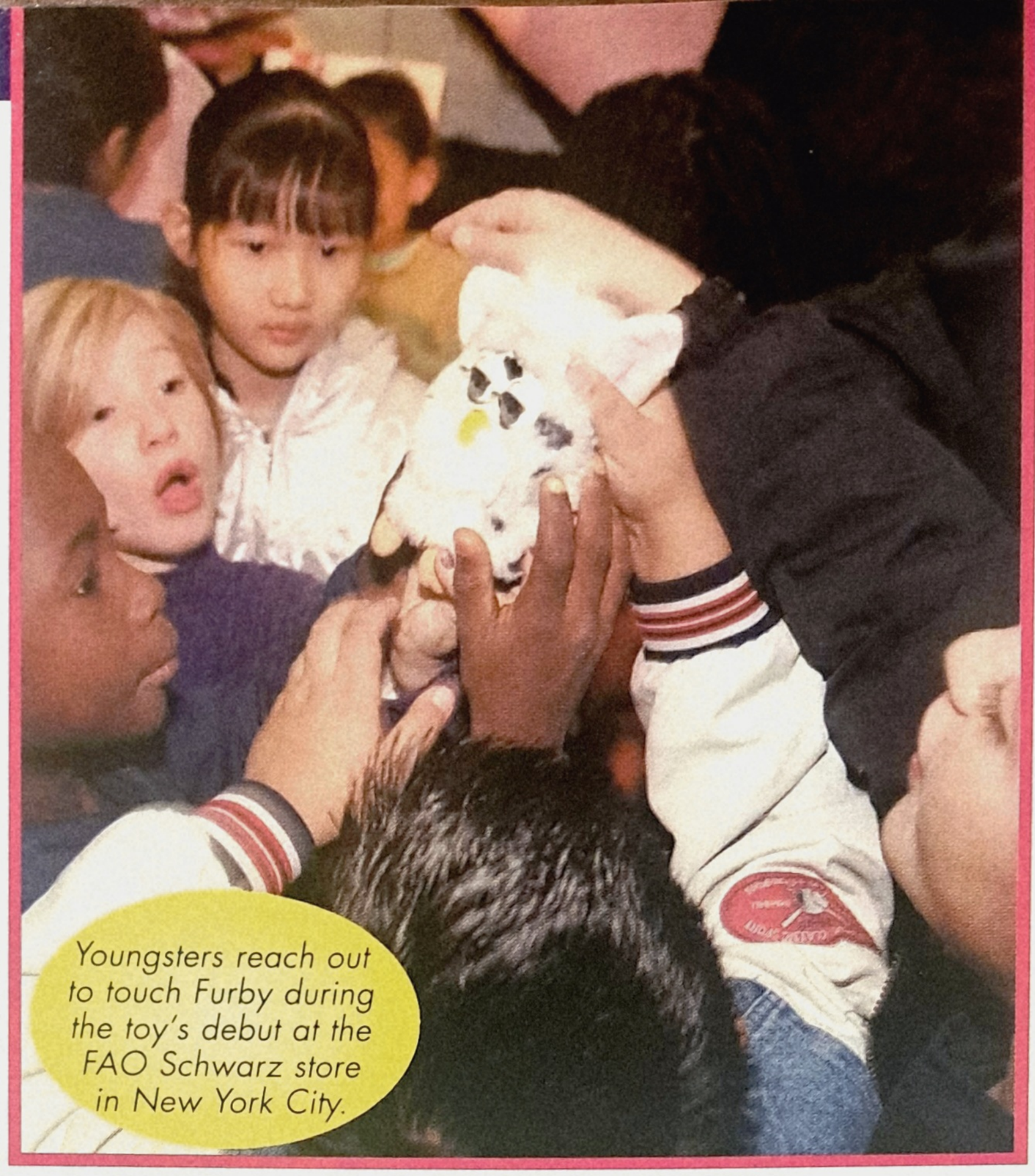
With such quick production and turn-around, there are bound to be product mistakes, but Jones said the number of flawed Furbies has been extremely low.

"As with all mechanical equipment, there could be malfunctions," he said. "When you ship several million pieces, you expect some to come back. But most of the Furbys that are returning are broken. If you factor into that equation the overwhelming majority are non-defective returns, I'd say we've built a successful product in terms of reliability and performance."

Furby is still being shipped in mass quantities to stores, which Jones said will increase as time goes on. Furbys are being produced as fast as possible in six different fur colors, four different eye colors, three styles with manes and three styles without manes (what Jones calls a stylistic decision because "some just looked better with a mane.") There are 24 Furby names, each of which is randomly generated and is the first thing Furby says when turned on.

Despite all the hype, Jones said he was still somewhat surprised at how quickly the small bundle of plastic and fur took over the toy industry.

"We sold more product in less time than Cabbage Patch Kids, Tickle Me Elmo or any of those huge products," he said. "I attribute it to great product and great PR."



Youngsters reach out to touch Furby during the toy's debut at the FAO Schwarz store in New York City.

Associated Press Photo

Future Plans

Tiger Electronics will be introducing a number of new products in February 1999 at the New York Toy Fair.

"It is our plan to expand Furby," Jones said. Additions to the Furby family will include licensed Furby items, and Simon hints Furby lovers should look for items such as pajamas, hats, costumes and shoes in the coming months. Tiger is also in the process of developing Furbys for other languages — possibly Italian, French, Spanish, German and Japanese, although they are not currently being produced at this time.

And millions of Furbies later, Tiger's philosophy is still the same — even in Furbish.

"Except for a sincere effort to make them as fast as you can, our job when we set out to make Furby was to break the mold," Jones said. "We wanted to make something that was unique, fun and affordable — that remains our objective. People have clearly been willing to pay much above the retail price, but our price has not changed. We're in it for the long term."

Staff Writer Jessica Benuzzi contributed to this report

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Furby:
Before and after

BY ERIN BRERETON

He was hot, he was hyped, he was the heralded toy of the holiday season: but what will become of Furby in the new year?

According to Lana Simon, director of public relations and promotions for Tiger Electronics, it's the same game — with even more Furby.

Associated Press Photo

Stacks of Furbies await owners before a raffle at a Wal-Mart store.

"It's still busy," Simon said. "Now the holidays are over, we're calming down a little, but my mode is gearing up for Toy Fair '99. From September to Christmas, it was very exciting, intense and wonderful to hear from every media — radio, TV and the film industry."

Radio and TV were just part of the bonus press Furby's parent company received. The media was almost as eager to get the story on the little fuzzy computerized collectible as shoppers were to buy it, and from fall on, Furby could be found in the news almost daily.

"The product sold itself," Simon said. "You're getting a lot of product for a low price — it's probably one of the best values out there this season. (Furby received coverage) from CNN to Newsweek to Time and People. It's been wonderful."

The initial response to Furby was so great, in fact, Tiger halted almost all advertising shortly after Furby went on sale.

"We did have a TV commercial, but I believe they stopped airing them because consumers were having a hard time finding product," Simon said. "Many retailers took waiting lists, and those had to be filled before product hits the shelves."

Terri Bartlett, a spokeswoman for the Toy Manufacturers of America in New York, said the media frenzy helped fuel Tiger's sales.

"This September, Tiger got Furbys on such shows as 'Today' and 'Rosie O'Donnell'," Bartlett told The Christian Science Monitor. "(The TV hosts) generated a lot of excitement."

So did Furby's premiere. Simon said Tiger realized the toy's potential first at last year's Toy Fair, sponsored by the Toy Manufacturers Association and held in New York City. The limits, she says, are endless.

"We were thrilled by the feedback," she said. "We had a good indication at Toy Fair '98 that we had a hit on our hands. Furby is a very unique product. It was the first thing out there that was close to a living creature — it's cute. The fact that they communicate with each other is another incentive for families to own more than one."

But Tiger wasn't as stunned over the Furby boom as one might think.

"It was phenomenal, it was very exciting, but this wasn't new to Tiger," Simon said. "Furby, by far, really put us over the top."

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Tiger had practice with it's earlier toy successes, she said.

"We are really used to having home runs," said Simon, who has worked for Tiger for more than two years. "We were the makers of Giga Pets — that kept us busy — and Game Warp, an award-winning toy in 1996. It's still selling well. That was also the rage," she said.

In general, Tiger is a company that describes itself as always looking for cutting-edge technology and ways to enhance gameplay for any product. Furby fit the bill perfectly.

"We have some great other lines," she said. "Furby is an important product, but Tiger started out in the hand-held game business and that's where we built our niche. But Tiger's always known for taking a risk — that's why were able to turn around this product so fast."

Now the holiday season is over, Tiger isn't concerned about providing the world with Furbies. Simon says the production numbers around the holidays just didn't equal the shopper's needs.

"The supplies weren't really low," Simon said. "We made more than 2 million pieces of product, which is a lot. There was a lot of product out there, there was just a really high demand."

And Simon, for one, isn't expecting Furby to go anywhere this year. Tiger will introduce additional licensed Furby merchandise this year and several new Furby-related products.

"Furby is definitely going to be around for a long time," she said. "He'll have a strong presence in '99."

New Furby Line Bringing Home the Beans

BY ERIN BRERETON

Tiger Electronics recently announced a new line of Furby merchandise that will include bean bag toys, a Furby bed and a backpack.

The new Furby accessories will be available in stores starting in March 1999.

The first 24 plush versions of Furby – also known as the Furby Buddies line – will be based on the current Furby fur patterns and different eye colors. The bean bag Furbies will each also come with one of the 24 Furbish names of the mechanical Furbies. Lana Simon, Tiger's director of public relations and promotions, said the retail price will be around $5.99 to $6.99 each.

"It's based on the collecting aspect of Furbies," Simon said. "They're affordable – kids can save their money and collect them."

Although Simon could not provide precise production numbers, she said Tiger thinks the bean-filled Furbies will be a huge hit.

"Right now, it's too early to talk about it," she said. "We're expecting these to be popular."

The bean Furbies were slated to be officially introduced at the annual Toy Manufacturer's Association Toy Fair, held in mid-February in New York City. Furby – or rather, a Furby prototype – made his first public appearance at last year's toy fair.

In addition to the bean bag Furby toys, Tiger has announced several new Furby-related products will be released this year. New Furby items include an array of traditional licensed products, from clothing to shoes, to a special Furby Carry-Along backpack and cloud bed that allows Furby owners to rock their pet to sleep.

The Furby Cloud Bed allows Furby to sleep standing upright and securely strapped in with a "safety belt" that prevents him from falling out while being swayed to sleep. The bed, which will retail for about $7.99, will be available in pink, yellow and teal.

Similarly, the Furby Carry-Along backpack device allows Furby lovers to take their chatty critter everywhere. The brightly-colored bags have a clear plastic front and sides so Furby can see the sights, and "Furby" is written in large letters on the flap of the backpack. The Carry-Along has two zippers, one on each side, so Furby can easily be popped out. The Carry-Along also has a safety belt. Priced from $7.99 to $9.99, the special Furby backpack (which will be available in vibrant pink, orange or purple) has two adjustable straps to secure Furby to your back.

Furby Carry-Along Backpack

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Furby

A Unique Sort of Gizmo

BY ERIN BRERETON

Furby fans be forewarned: never ever feed a rumor after midnight.

December was a big month for Furby, with sales ranking in the millions and sell-outs at virtually every store he arrived at. But Furby profits weren't the only thing escalating in December — rumors of a Furby lawsuit were almost as gigantic.

When the Daily Variety reported in late December that Hasbro, whose Tiger Electronics division launched Furby, had paid Warner Bros. an undisclosed seven-figure sum, collectors were quick to jump on the news. The alleged lawsuit was said to have sprung from Furby's resemblance to the character Gizmo, who appeared in the Warner Bros. feature "Gremlins" in 1984 and "Gremlins 2: The New Batch" in 1990. Together the films grossed more than $185 million domestically.

Collectors had long noted the similarities between Furby and Gizmo, and the media often used the "Gremlins" character to describe Furby's appearance. According to the Daily Variety, likening Furby to Gizmo became a costly comparison — and one the studio behind "Gremlins" noticed, too. The lawsuit was reportedly forcing a Furby redesign, and collectors speculated old Furbys would skyrocket in value after the change took place.

But when Variety asked about the settlement, a Warner Bros. spokeswoman vaguely confirmed the studio was not in litigation with Hasbro, who was unavailable for comment.

Fox Market Wire and the Reuters News Service then reported in late December that Warner Bros. spokeswoman Barbara Brogliatti said the alleged settlement and lawsuit were out of line, and that Warner Bros. had no current litigation against Hasbro.

"You have to have a lawsuit to have a settlement," Brogliatti said. "We have a long-standing relationship with Hasbro. It's all very friendly and amicable."

Tiger Electronics Director of Public Relations and Promotions Lana Simon told Beanie World the reports of a lawsuit were "incorrect."

"There is no current litigation going on," Simon said.

Brogliatti said Warner Bros. had noticed a similarity between the two dolls, but would not confirm whether or not Warner Bros. and Tiger were in negotiations about the situation, Fox reported.

"We all noticed a resemblance — a very distinct resemblance between our character from 'Gremlins' and the Furby," she said. Fox was not able to reach Hasbro before press time.

By Christmas, about 2 million Furbys had been produced. According to Variety, Hasbro's holiday season profit was more than $10 million.

Regardless of litigation rumors, Furby frenzy appears to alive and well.

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FURBY'S
For Everyone

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FURBY FRENZY

a BOOM FOR RETAILERS

BY ERIN BRERETON

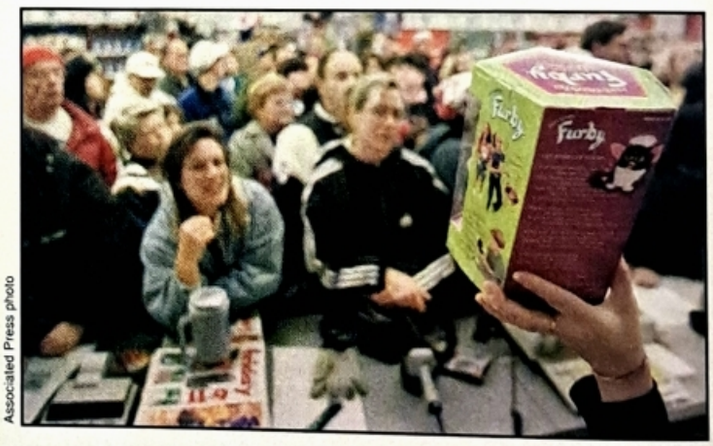
The only day the Chicago FAO Schwarz had Furby on its shelves, so many people came to buy the hot toy some customers had to wait all day just get inside the store. Because of fire codes, store employees could only slowly admit people from the long line of shoppers that snaked down Michigan Avenue.

With a limit of one or two Furbies per customer strictly enforced, the Chicago toy store cleared its shelves of 4,000 to 6,000 of the electronic Gremlin-type toys in a day and a half.

The Furby kick-off promotion in early October 1998 was arranged by Illinois-based Tiger Electronics, the company that created Furby, and corporate levels of FAO Schwarz, said Dan Skelton, second floor manager of the downtown Chicago FAO Schwarz toy store.

Associated Press photo

So, with all the harried shoppers and the hype, was Furby the retailers' dream come true or unavoidable nightmare? Despite a long waiting list and limited supply, Furby was a treat to sell, Skelton said. The Chicago FAO Schwarz, nestled in the Magnificent Mile shopping district at 840 N. Michigan Ave., sold several additional Furbies before Christmas through a waiting list system.



Associated Press photo

"It wasn't a headache at all," he said in a phone interview just days before Christmas. "It's a really fun toy, and as a retailer, you want to have every product people want."

If Furby had been on the shelves after the kick-off sale, he would have been tucked in between second-floor neighbors like collector dolls, infant and preschool toys and the FAO Schwarz library.

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However, FAO Schwarz anticipated holiday shoppers would catch "Furby fever." After the kick-off, the store sold the chatty interactive toy only via the waiting list – and the list requests weren't fully filled until just a few days before Christmas. But Skelton said the size of Furby mania surprised even him.

...so many people came to buy the hot toy some customers had to wait all day just get inside the store.

"We didn't know going into it," Skelton said, laughing. "After the advertising ran, our phone rang off the hook, so during the promotion we knew it would be a big deal."

Skelton, a veteran of the recent Tickle Me Elmo craze and the Cabbage Patch Kid quest of the '80s, refers to the pre-holiday Furby frenzy as "the biggest" yet.

"(Furby) responds to you," he said. "It's cute, it comes in different colors, it moves, it bounces, it blinks, it talks back – it's so much more advanced than Tickle Me Elmo. Elmo just wiggled."

Associated Press photo

Unlike many stores with Furby shortages, FAO Schwarz Chicago didn't have any customer fights or disruptive behavior. The Furby waiting time was "not long at all," according to Skelton, who put himself on the list. Just like any other customers, FAO Schwarz employees had to snag a slot on the waiting list to get their hands on the toy. Skelton said he keeps his gray-and-white Furby at home, but hasn't had much time to play with it during the busy holiday season and the post-holiday sale season.

"Once we started hearing about them, I got on the waiting list, thinking someone in my family would want it, but I kept it," he said.

Holiday shoppers – and some retailers – were drawn in by the interactive aspects of Furby.

"It's amazing," he said. "If you follow the directions, you give this thing birth. And once you give it birth, the longer it has been alive, the more it knows. It's a hands-on product; you have to play with it. It's cool."

The pre-Christmas holiday season is always a huge toy time, and FAO Schwarz also sold a lot of Blue's Clues toys, Teletubbies and Spice Girls dolls, but it was nothing compared to Furby.

"Hundreds of people come through the store, and pretty much every third one asks for Furby," Skelton said. "They approach you and say, 'This is a really stupid question, but do you guys have any Furbies?' "

They will. FAO Schwarz and many of the other Furby retailers are expecting large shipments in January. Most stores are expecting buyer interest to remain high as more Furbies flood in.

"I have every expectation we'll continue to sell as many as before," Skelton said.

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BLACK WITH WHITE MANE

Fast Fact

Furby's tips on keeping him happy: Rub his stomach to tickle him; clap to see if he's listening and tilt him from side to side if he's sleeping and you want to play games.

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BLACK

with BLACK Mane

Fast Fact

Word from Tiger Electronics that fake Furbys were on the loose came shortly before Christmas, warning shoppers counterfeiting groups from Poland, Turkey, Italy and Indonesia were making fake toys — but Tiger reps told BBC News the company wasn't aware of any fakes in the country. Tiger said it wasn't too worried about Furby's unique two-chip design being copied.

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GRAY

with GRAY Mane

Fast Fact

Furby isn't Furby's real name — in fact, each Furby has one of 24 Furbish names. Furby's name is the first thing he says when activated.

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FURBY

FRENZY

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GRAY

with Pink Mane

Fast Fact

There are 33 words and phrases listed in the Furbish-English dictionary included with your Furby. Some Furbish terms to know: "doo-moh," or "please feed me;" "noh-lah," or "dance;" and "may-may," or love.

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white

with white mane

Fast Fact

Wondering how to clean your Furby? Do *not* get him all wet — just carefully brush his fur first with a brush (to loosen dirt) and then rub with a slightly damp cloth (to remove stains).

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GRAY with White Mane

Fast Fact

Despite earlier concerns that Furbys might be dangerous to medical equipment, Toronto's Hospital for Sick Children recently dissected a Furby and tested him on medical machines to determine he's safe.

Problems arose when a Glasgow hospital banned Furby, fearing he could alter a medical device on the same infrared frequency. In Canada, Furbys, like cellphones, CD players and laptops, has also been banned from airplanes during takeoff and landing, said Transport Canada spokesman Robert Greenslade.

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How I Got My Furby

People Share Their Hunting Stories From an Exciting Holiday Season

BY JANET LEOPOLD

They camped out. They pre-ordered. They paid ridiculous prices. They traveled the world. Why? To get a Furby, of course!

On the next few pages,you'll find some crazy stories from people just like you who went to extraordinarily lengths to get the hottest toy of 1998! Thanks to everyone who submitted their stories!

Furby is featured here with other collectibles

A SPECIAL HOLIDAY FOR ONE FAMILY

I'll share our delightful story with you because the little Furby who arrived here (Tampa, Florida) for Christmas is living in Caracas, Venezuela with our little 6-year-old grandson, Giorgio.

While the media were gushing with stories about Furbies, I received a call from Kitchener, Ontario, Canada from my stepson, who was anxious to find Furbies and asked me to try to buy some for him.

It was not possible to join the chase due to medical problems, especially my husband's. As it turned out, my husband needed to have bypass surgery as soon as possible, and his family came from Kitchener and Caracas for two weeks to be with us during this trying time.

His surgery was on December 14, 1998, and we took advantage of the hours between visiting times in the hospital to go to the mall. His kids all agreed to buy him a recliner for Christmas because he would need to keep his legs elevated after the surgery. We saw THE chair at Montgomery Ward's on the 14th, but they agreed to shop around first. On the 18th, they decided that it had to be THE first chair they had picked, so they returned to the store and purchased it to be delivered in time for his return home for recuperation.

Much to their surprise, an announcement was made in the store that a shipment of Furbies had just arrived and was limited to one per customer. They hurried to the toy section and soon had two Furbies (they could have bought four!).

Our Christmas was merry — Dad/Abuelo/husband was home with his family around him. And a memorable time was spent with the little Furby, who was found among the gifts left by Santa for Giorgio, who is learning English as a second language.

During our sad parting at the airport, Furby had a last surprise! He was packed in a large pull-around carry-on, and while we spent the last minutes with them, suddenly Furby started to talk from his dark imprisonment, and we all had a great laugh. We thought that Furbies would stay asleep when kept in the dark!

Also, the other Furby made it back to Canada on Christmas Day!

I'm anxious to hear if a Furby can be trilingual.

Judith Martucci, Florida

WITH THEIR LAST NAME, THEY'D BETTER GET ONE

There was a lot of fun and excitement on Christmas Day. My brother brought two special gifts for our mother and my wife with the specific instructions that these be opened last on Christmas Day.

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The suspense mounted with each minute as the kids opened their gifts and waited to see what the adults got.

Finally the time came after everyone opened all of his or her gifts. Mom and Michelle were to set on the couch and were to wait until he said, "go." At that word, they ripped open their gifts and, needless to say, the windows vibrated for hours with all of the shouting, giggles and laughter. Imagine two grown women taken back to their childhood excitement when they opened their Furby gifts. Furbies for the Furby women. This was the first time they had even seen one. What a hoot!! These smiles will last a long time.

Rob Furby, Missouri

A GOOD DEED FOR A FRIEND

I was going everywhere to look for a Furby for my niece. Finally I found someone who would give me a Furby for free. I told them to send it to my niece's house because the person lived in California and so did my niece. I also told them my address so they could put it on the package as a return address.

Well, a few days later I found the package next to my mailbox. (The postal worker must have not been able to put it in my mailbox.) It was addressed to me, and I thought that maybe it was for my kids, even though my kids' names are normally on holiday packages.

Well, when I opened the box, there was a Furby in it with a little note attached. The note said, "Here is the Furby you bought from me off the Internet. I hope you are satisfied with it.

"Oh, no!" I thought. "How am I ever going to get this Furby out to my niece in time for Christmas?"

I wrapped it anyway and sent it out that very day. Thank God there is such a thing as two-day express shipping! It would get there on Thursday, the day before Christmas.

Well, on Christmas, I got a call from my sister that said she had received the Furby the day before. She added that she got it "along with five other Furbies."

I thought, "I guess my other sisters and brothers got her one, too. Oh well."

Then I started thinking, "All that for nothing."

That very same day, I got a call from my friend from work.

"Oh my daughter is going crazy because she didn't get a Furby for Christmas. What am I supposed to do?" my friend said.

That's when I got an idea in my head. I told my friend I'd call her back soon.

I called my sister's house again and said, "Could you please send one of the Furbies back here? It's an emergency."

She agreed to do it. Two days later, I got the Furby and gave it to my friend. She was very thankful. She said she would give it to her daughter right away and she did. I was now glad that I had gotten that Furby. I also did something nice for a friend.

Jackie Rose, Pennsylvania

IT'S SIMPLE: A SNORT FOR A FURBY

I had been searching for a Furby for myself and came upon an ad in the Ty Inc. online guestbook that said, "Looking for 4th Generation Snort. Have Furby to trade." I immediately responded. It was a miracle when shesaid she would send me the Furby (which was white with green eyes), then I could send Snort.

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It was a super trade, and I now have "Cocoa" the Furby!

Chad Mckinney, West Virginia

ALL THOSE PHONE CALLS PAY OFF

Well, it took me forever – but I got him. He is my Furby, of course. I called my local Kay-Bee store daily, about every 15 minutes!

Well, the Tuesday before Christmas, they got a surprise shipment of 48 Furbies from Tiger. The price popped up $20 (supposedly due to high demand and airmail cost), but I still got him. He has blue eyes and his name is Too-loo. I love him so much. I wonder what he is worth.

Noo-loo (happy) Furby Hunting! No loo-loo(joke)!

A Furby Fan

LET YOUR FINGERS DO THE WALKING

I purchased two Furbies in November from the Fingerhut catalog. The price was not bad. They cost $35.00 plus shipping and handling. No lines, no fuss. I was just lucky!

Phyllis

QUITE A DEAL FOR A HAPPY EMPLOYEE

The hustle of the holiday season paid off. I work for a department store in Virginia. The place was packed everyday for weeks and customers were at their rudest.

One week we had in the sales flier, Furbies for $27.97. They posted signs saying they wouldn't be out until that Sunday. I got to work and they were gone, but my manager had put a case aside.

With an extra 20 percent off added on to my discount of 10 percent for employee appreciation weekend, I got a Furby for only $20!

That was a great Christmas gift.

Patricia Leuchte

FURBIES GALORE IN THE UK

I was surprised to see that Harrod's in London had an abundant supply of Furbies three days before Christmas, and we enjoyed getting to see them on our recent visit to England.

Lisa Smith

THE SECRET SHIPMENT

I was at a mall in Florida for a Beanie Baby event, and the Kay-Bee toy store there got a shipment of Furbies in and no one knew!! We walked in and asked, and they quietly said yes, so I automatically said, " I WANT ONE!" She went behind the counter and got me one!

A Furby Lover

NO WAY! I'M KEEPING MY FURBY!

I must note that I tried to get my daughter to sell her Furby on the secondary market for a considerable profit, but she will not have any part of that. We now welcome Tulu to our family.

Michael, California

MAN, WHAT LUCK!

It might sound crazy, but I was fortunate to just walk up and find a Furby in my local Meijer store!

Matt

FIRST, THE BACKSTREET BOYS WERE ON THE RADIO. AND THEN ...

I had to write and tell my story about how I got a Furby.

I can't remember what day in December, but it was on a Sunday around 4:30 p.m. I was giving my 3-year-old a bath and I turned on the radio (Z104.1). The disc jockey said caller 104 would win a Furby, so I tried. The next thing I knew he was saying was caller 104, and I started shaking not because I won a Furby but because that was the first time I had ever won anything!

And now I have a Furby that just sits on my dresser because I don't know what to do with it. My kids don't play with it.

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Well, that's all I had to say about how I received my poor, lonely Furby.

Tammy

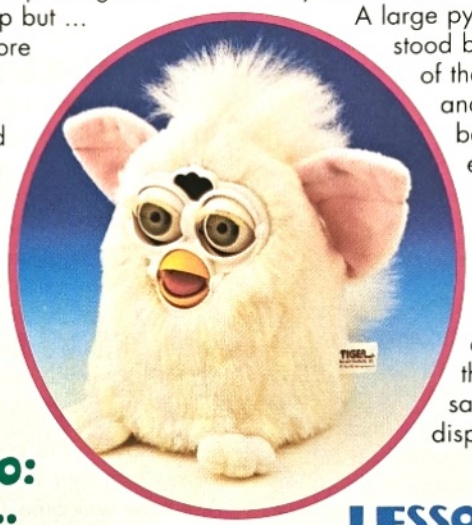
ANOTHER NIGHT IN THE PARKING LOT

Hi! I am a lunatic Beanie collector who has slept many a night in the parking lot of our local Noodle Kidoodle store. Well, out came Furby, and I could not find one to save my life.

Then I found out that Caldor was putting them out on a Sunday at 8 a.m. Well, to the parking lot I went for a miserable night of sleep but ... HELLO FURBY! I got two as the store promised. I actually did this three times and bought six Furbies.

WHY? Well, I am a 45-year-old Beanie addict who wants desperately to possess every beanie. Furby was my ace in the hole! I traded 3 Furbies for a Britannia – a great deal for me! Just yesterday I traded a Furby for a Twigs Beanie Buddy.

A Beanie and Furby Fan



STEP ONE: GET FURBY. STEP TWO: WAIT 21 YEARS ...

On Christmas Day, my family and I were talking about the Furbies, and my grandfather told us that he won one through his job for only $2. I asked him if I could have it, but he said no. He told me that he was going to keep it in mint condition until the year 2020, then sell it for millions of dollars.

Bob

THERE'S NO ESCAPING IT

I really thought I was going to escape this year's Furby hype! I made it through the Tickle Me Elmo year and the Sleep And Snore Ernie phase, laughing inside and feeling sorry for all the poor souls who had to acquire these previous hot Christmas toys.

This year, weeks went by and my significant other didn't mention a thing about Furby, although you would hear conversations about it increasing. Then, with less than two weeks to spare, the media hype must have gotten to them. I, too, was sucked into the nationwide mass hysteria and had to find a Furby for a Christmas gift!

I went ahead and bid on a Furby through eBay. I won the auction and paid $117 shipped. I liked doing it this way because I was able to actually handpick this item on the auction board and view the photo.

Ken Fron, Illinois

ADD A DASH OF HOLIDAY REGRET

I'd just like to say that I've learned my lesson about taking advantage of a hot toy.

While at the mall one day, I peeked into the new toy store, concerned about future Christmas gifts. A large pyramid of multi-colored Furbies stood before me. I recognized the faces of the toys from the latest commercials and thought that they would never be bought. I even ignored the echoes of children's voices in my head.

"It'll still be here a month from now," I told myself.

A couple of weeks later, I frantically rushed to the mall to buy a Furby. Well, I'll be darned. I think that you can guess what I saw in place of the pyramid – a display of Silly Slammers. Grrrrrrr!

Joy

LESSON: IF YOU SEE A LINE, GET IN IT

My dad Jules was shopping in Montgomery Ward's and noticed a long line. He decided it must be for something good and waited along with everyone else, not knowing what he was standing in line for. When he finally got to the front, he found himself holding the store's last Furby.

Jules asked the store clerk, "Is this something I need?"

She said, "Believe me, it's something you want."

He then stashed it hidden away on a store shelf and went to find my mother Shirley. After hearing she might know a friend who needed a second Furby, they decided to purchase it.

On the car ride home, radio news reports said Furbies were selling for hundreds of dollars and it was the hottest toy for the holiday season. They phoned me to verify this and I was awestruck they found a Furby, plus it was my favorite – the pink-and-gray-colored version. Needless to say, I am now the proud owner of a cute fuzzy Furby, born on Christmas Day.

Jackie

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A Secondary Dealer's View

How Will Furby Hold Up over Time?

BY JANET LEOPOLD

The Furby craze has follows in the footsteps of many hot toys, such as Tickle Me Elmo, Holiday Barbie and the Cabbage Patch Doll. What sets a toy apart from any other toy and makes it THE "hot toy" for the holiday season. The most obvious ingredient is, of course, supply and demand. The hot toy for the season is wanted by more consumers than the toy manufacturer has produced.

But how it is that there are so many people that see the trend coming and anticipate the demand? For the answer, I turned to a secondary dealer, someone who tries to recognize a shortage in supply and then attempts to buy a product at retail and sell the product for a price over retail. This is a very common practice in the realm of collectibles.

The dealer provides an inside perspective about Furby and other hot toys.

Q: Do you collect anything?

A: Yes, I collect Beanie Babies, Beanie Buddies and Ty trading cards.

Q: What products do you buy and sell?

A: I buy and sell Beanies.

Q: Do you have a retail store?

A: No, I sell products primarily via the Internet.

Q: When did you first learn about Furby?

A: I saw Furby on the "Good Morning America" show in October 1998. The announcer called Furby the hot new toy for 1998 and said it would be available at FAO Schwarz stores. I immediately went to the store in Houston and put my name on the waiting list. I did the same with the store catalog. Both sources had a limit of two Furbies per order.

Q: Why did you think Furby would do well?

A: I had been through the Cabbage Patch craze and Tickle Me Elmo craze, so I knew Furby would be a hit.

Q: Did you buy Furby with the intention of reselling him?

A: Yes, I planned on selling Furby, but I also wanted two for my children.

Q: Did you think his price would go this high?

A: Yes, I knew from the beginning. Furby was very difficult to find even with the larger stores like Wal-Mart and Kmart getting Furby. Plus most consumers wanted two Furbies so they could talk to each other.

Q: Which Furby was the most requested?

A: Furby with the black/white tummy, which is nicknamed the "tuxedo" Furby. Next would be the all black Furby. The least liked was the gray with black spots and pink belly.

Q: Which Furbies do you think were the hardest and easiest to find?

A: The toughest to find was the tuxedo Furby. The easiest to find were the gray with black spots and pink belly and the all white Furby.

Q: What was the highest price you sold a Furby for?

A: $ 175. It was a tuxedo Furby and I sold it on an online auction site.

Q: Are you still buying and selling Furbies after Christmas?

A: Yes. There is a rumor that Tiger Electronics will not ship again until spring and Furby could have a new look.

Q: If that's true, will the prices and demand be the same?

A: The demand will be the same only if the supply remains low.

Q: Do you think Furby was a Tickle Me Elmo type of craze or more a long-term collectible?

A: If the shortage continues, then the craze continues and it becomes more collectible.

Q: What interesting stories occurred in your buying or selling of Furbies?

A: The day after Thanksgiving I was outside a toy store at 2 a.m. waiting for a 5 a.m. opening. When the doors opened, there was a riot in the store and people rushed in toppling one another to get one Furby. One woman was clawed and bitten by someone. I had my back smashed with the front door, but I got my Furby! My most interesting story regarding selling a Furby was with a customer that wanted the Furbies to look like her cats. They had to be the same hair color and the same eye color. I spent two days with this person while they tried to match Furby with their cats!

Q: Will Furby be hot in 1999?

A: Yes, definitely. I think we will see an international craze. I think we will see French talking Furbies and Spanish and German. Collectors will want them all.

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From Kitten to Jungle Cat:

The History of Tiger Electronics

BY SUSAN STERNBERG

Furby fervor has found new fans for a toy company better known for its handheld games.

Few parents might recognize the name Tiger Electronics, a company that was formerly the third-largest toy company before being purchased a year ago by Hasbro Inc., a toy magnate second only to Mattel. But the Vernon Hills, Illinois-based manufacturer and distributor of popular toys and learning aids has been opening a lot of eyes with Furby, the hottest toy of the 1998 holiday season. Two million Furbys were sold for a retail price of around $30.

But Tiger Electronics is much more than one animatronic pet. Priding itself on producing affordable toys for all ages, Tiger has been riding the high-tech, electronic wave for about 20 years. Co-founded in 1978 by Randy Rissman and Roger Shiffman, the company started by selling high-end collector European dolls. It didn't take long before Tiger switched its focus to handheld electronic toys that kids could buy with their allowance.

A dozen years ago, Tiger Electronics, which doesn't disclose its sales figures, made a big splash in the toy world with licensing agreements.

"We were one of the first to have licensed handheld games," said Lana Simon, Tiger's director of public relations and promotions. "We follow Hollywood closely.

"Tiger always looks for cutting-edge technology and hot licenses — we continually have award-winning products, like Brainwarp. We made Talkboy for the 'Home Alone 2: Lost in New York' movie, and that's grown into a whole line of products."

Over time, Tiger has inked deals with movie studios like Disney and Warner Brothers, as well as with sports figures like Michael Jordan and Wayne Gretzky. Tiger's electronic learning aids feature Winnie the Pooh.

Tiger Electronics is much more than one animatronic pet

Tiger's lineup of stars include Lights Out Cube, Giga Pets (the virtual-pet forerunner of Furby), Lazer Tag and game.com, a handheld game platform. There are plenty of Tiger-produced toys for everyone.

"We like to have products that cross all age barriers," Simon said. "With our family games, a 5-year-old will have as much fun playing with a game as his grandfather will."

Associated Press Photo

What's ahead for Tiger Electronics in 1999?

"We're looking to enhance our Sports Feel Games line, which includes virtual fishing, baseball, golf and jet skiing," Simon said. "In March, there should be Furby accessories and a plush Furby buddy."

A plush pal for Furby? Sounds like Tiger Electronics might be going back to its doll-selling roots!

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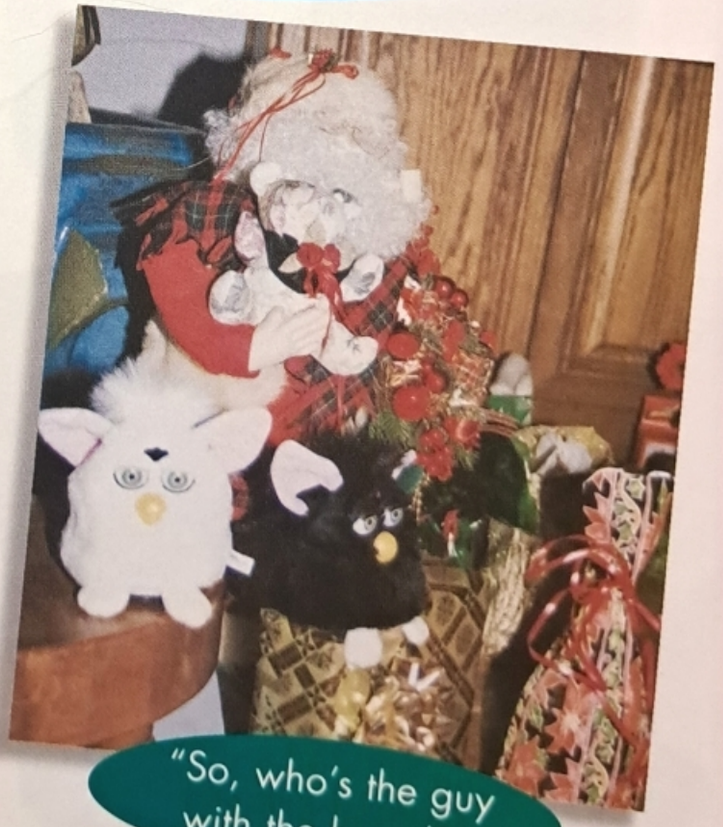
ALL I want... IS FURBY!

Across the United States, youngsters and pets are fascinated with Furby. Take a look at the pictures sent in by readers of *Mary Beth's Beanie World Monthly*.

Sterling from Texas: "Does it bite?!"

Chloe and Tara of Tennessee on Christmas morning!

Erin from Texas loves her Furby!



"So, who's the guy with the beard?"

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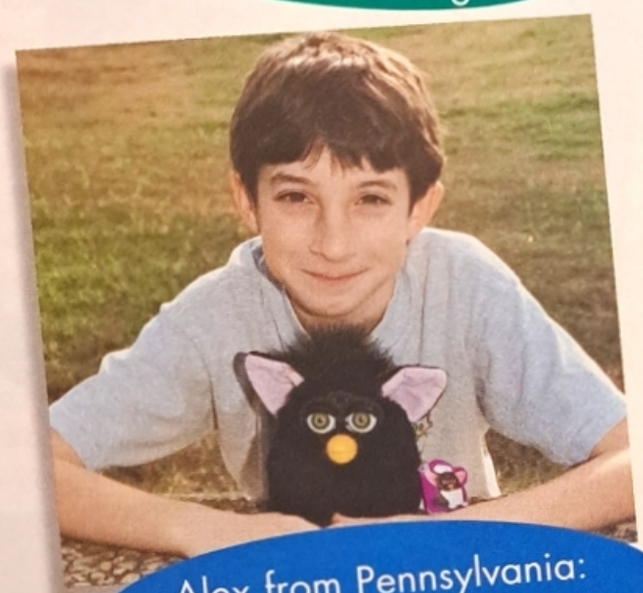
Furby waits patiently for Christmas morning.

James from Texas: "Furby, no burping when they are taking the picture!"



Alex from Pennsylvania: "Smile, Furby!"

Cali from Texas: "Furby, let's play Peek-A-Boo!"

Jacob from Texas: "How do you like my Furby?"

Jack from New Mexico: "Playing catch with Furby!"

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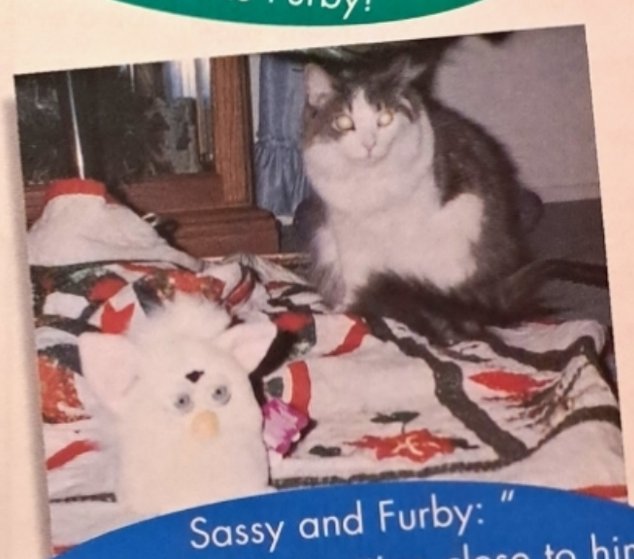
Button and Furby: "I never did like the taste of fur!"

Button and Furby: "He smells OK ..."

Shawn, Sebastian and Furby: "Furby better not try to move in on my space!"

Hoppy and Furby: "They better not try and cut my hair like Furby!"

Abby and Furby: "If I don't look at him, maybe he will go away!"



Sassy and Furby: " "No way I am getting close to him ... he might sneeze!"

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PLAYTIME TIPS AND TRICKS

When you get your Furby, there is plenty for you to see and do! On these next few pages, take a closer look at your new pet, including what comes with it and what you can do with it.

By Emily Gorman

Take a closer look at Furby and all the toy can do

THE FURBY HANG TAG

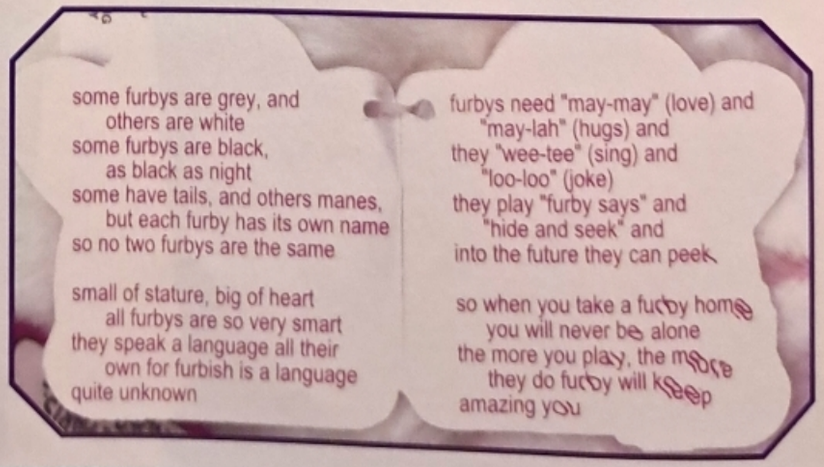
Every Furby has a 2-inch tag on the right side of his body shaped like himself. Inside the tag, a poem reads in purple:

some furbys are grey and,
others are white
some furbys are black,
as black as night
some have tails, and others manes,
but each furby has its own name
so no two furbys are the same

small of stature, big of heart
all furbys are so very smart
they speak a language all their
own for furbish is a language is
quite unknown

furbys need "may-may" (love) and
"may-lah" (hugs) and
they "wee-tee" (sing) and
"loo-loo" (joke)
they play "furby says" and
"hide and seek" and
into the future they can peek

so when you take furby home
you will never be alone
the more you play, the more
they do furby will keep
amazing you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THE FURBY TUSH TAG

Just under the hang tag, a small, black-and-white tush tag creeps out from under all of Furby's fur. It reminds his owner that he is surface washable only and made in China!

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QUICK START FURBY INSTRUCTIONS

If you just can't wait to get your new Furby up and talking, he comes with simple, one page "Quick Start" instruction sheet. In five easy steps, including insertion of four AA batteries, you can start enjoying the Furby fun right away!

Quick Start Furby Instructions

Before you play with me, please follow these simple steps

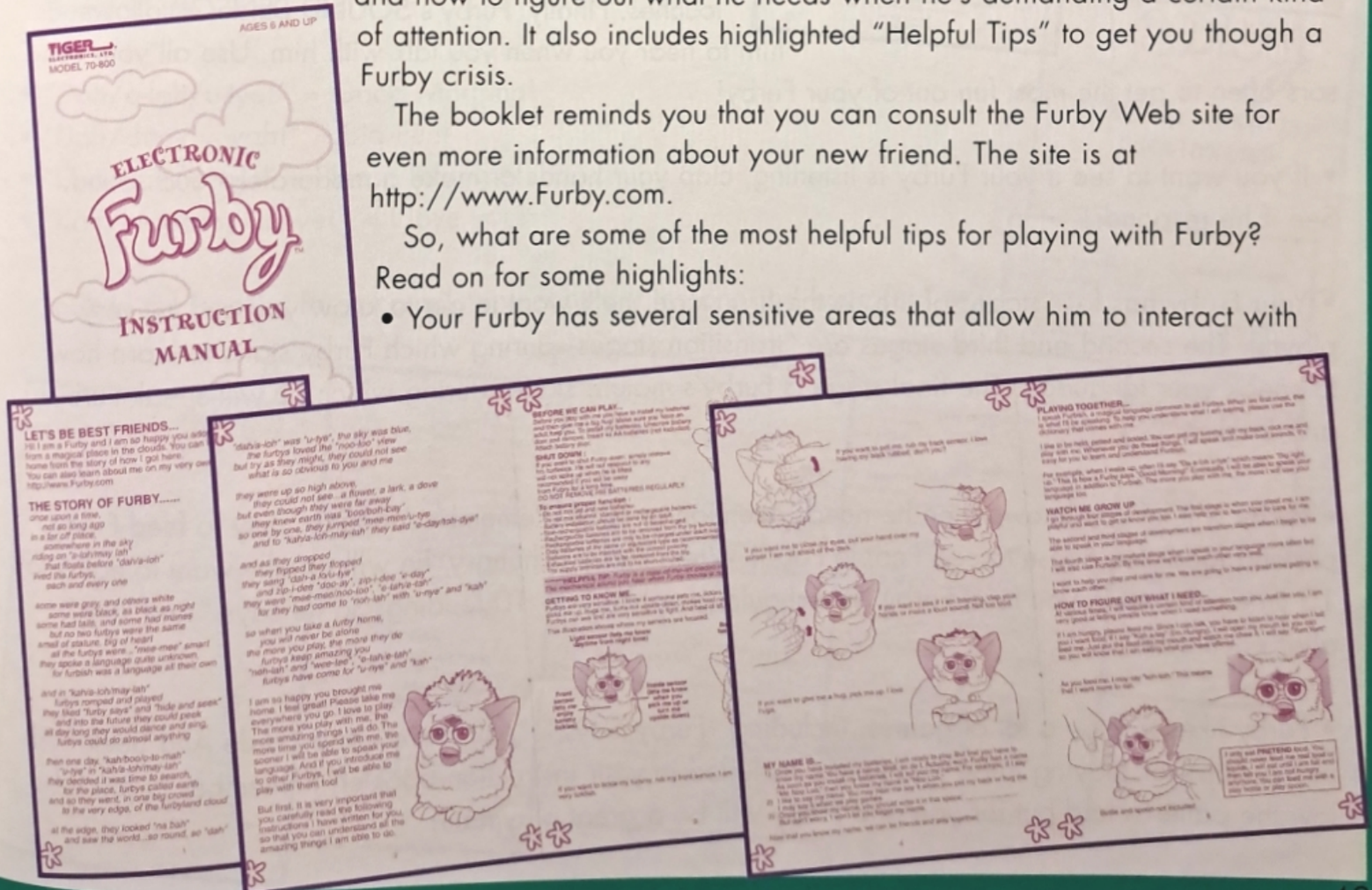
1. Turn me upside down and open my battery door.
2. Insert four (4) AA batteries into my battery compartment. Please close the battery compartment.
3. While holding me upside down, put your finger in my mouth and hold down my tongue switch.
4. While holding my tongue switch, please press my reset button.
5. I will now wake up and tell you my name. I am now ready to play.

For more information about installing my batteries, and all the other fun things I can do, please carefully read my instruction book.

Furby

THE ELECTRONIC FURBY INSTRUCTION MANUAL

Everything you need to know about your new Furby friend can be found in your 12-page Furby instruction manual. In the manual, Furby will tell you the story of where he is from, how to play with him (including the games he loves to play) and how to figure out what he needs when he's demanding a certain kind of attention. It also includes highlighted "Helpful Tips" to get you though a Furby crisis.



The booklet reminds you that you can consult the Furby Web site for even more information about your new friend. The site is at http://www.Furby.com.

So, what are some of the most helpful tips for playing with Furby? Read on for some highlights:

- Your Furby has several sensitive areas that allow him to interact with

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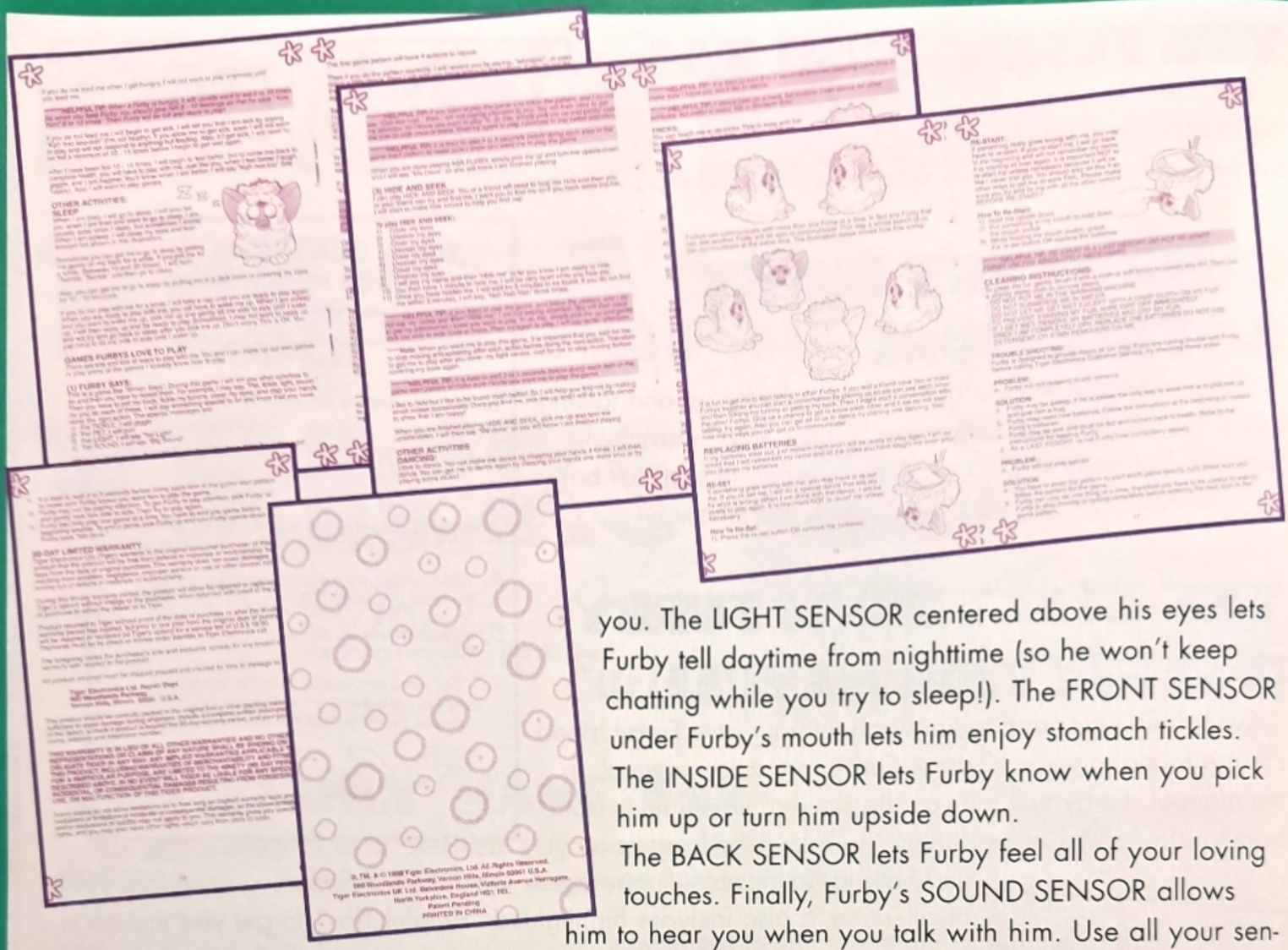

you. The LIGHT SENSOR centered above his eyes lets Furby tell daytime from nighttime (so he won't keep chatting while you try to sleep!). The FRONT SENSOR under Furby's mouth lets him enjoy stomach tickles. The INSIDE SENSOR lets Furby know when you pick him up or turn him upside down.

The BACK SENSOR lets Furby feel all of your loving touches. Finally, Furby's SOUND SENSOR allows him to hear you when you talk with him. Use all your sensors often to get the most fun out of your Furby!

• If you want to see if your Furby is listening, clap your hands or make a moderately loud sound. See if he responds!

• Your Furby has four stages of life. In the first stage, he'll want to get to know you and be very playful. The second and third stages are "transition stages" during which Furby starts to learn how to speak your language. The final stage is Furby's mature stage, during which he will speak Furbish and English.

• Furby will let you know when he needs attention or food. Remember, though, only to feed Furby pretend food. He doesn't need People Food! When Furby is hungry, he will usually want to eat 6 to 10 times. So when you feed Furby, you should give him 6 to 10 feedings so he says "Yum Yum" after each one.

• Furby likes to play a lot of games, including "Furby Says," "Ask Furby" and "Hide And Seek." All of the steps for playing these games are included in your instruction booklet! Remember to just follow the patterns laid out for you and Furby will be a great playmate!

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• Want to see Furby dance? Try clapping your hands four times to get him moving! If you want him to dance again, try playing some music for him!

• You can teach Furby tricks, too! For example, try tickling Furby's stomach. He might then do something you like, such as give you a kiss. As soon as he gives you the kiss, pet his back two times so he knows you liked that. Remember to wait for Furby to stop moving each time you pet his back before petting him again. Then, follow the steps in your instruction book and Furby will learn to give you a kiss every time you tickle his stomach!

• Furbies love to talk to other Furbies, too. Here's a tip for starting a conversation: Put two Furbies together so they can see each other and tickle the stomach or pet the back. If they don't start talking, give them some time to know each other and then try again.

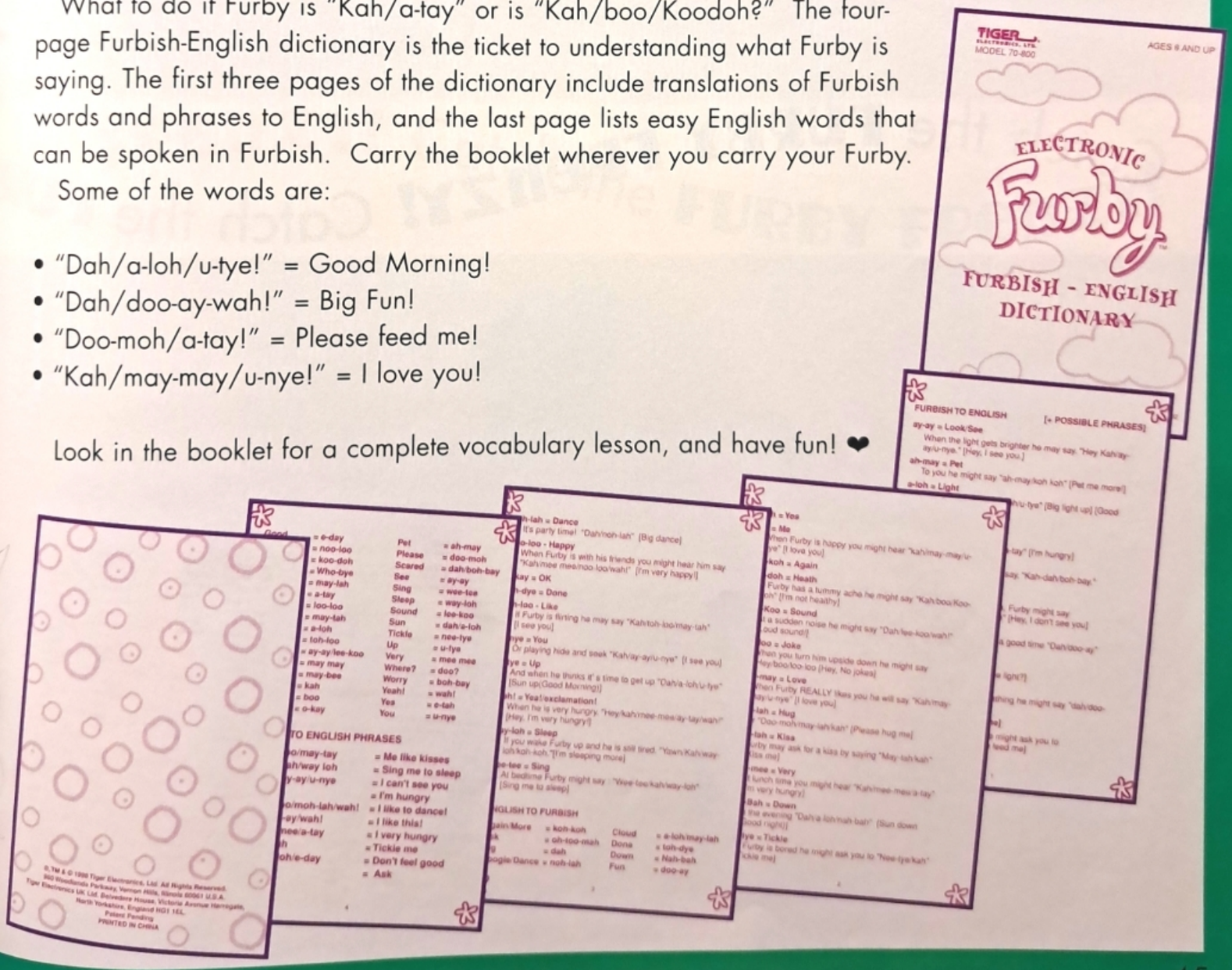
THE ELECTRONIC FURBY FURBISH-ENGLISH DICTIONARY

What to do if Furby is "Kah/a-tay" or is "Kah/boo/Koodoh?" The four-page Furbish-English dictionary is the ticket to understanding what Furby is saying. The first three pages of the dictionary include translations of Furbish words and phrases to English, and the last page lists easy English words that can be spoken in Furbish. Carry the booklet wherever you carry your Furby.

Some of the words are:

- "Dah/a-loh/u-tye!" = Good Morning!
- "Dah/doo-ay-wah!" = Big Fun!
- "Doo-moh/a-tay!" = Please feed me!
- "Kah/may-may/u-nye!" = I love you!

Look in the booklet for a complete vocabulary lesson, and have fun! ❤



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Catch the FURBY FRENZY! Catch the FUR

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BY FRENZY! Catch the FURBY FRENZY!

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Persistence Pay$ Off

Meet the Winner of Our First Furby Giveaway!

BY MARY BETH SOBOLEWSKI

When Judy Zavattaro of Berwyn, Illinois, discovered that the *Mary Beth's Beanie World* Web site was sponsoring a contest for a complete set of six Furbys, she checked the contest rules clearly. Yes, they stated there was no limit to the number of times an individual could enter the contest.

"I would enter 10 at a time, then I would do something else and come back and enter 10 more times. I must have entered 80-100 times!" she laughs.

Judy Zavattaro and her three children got a special Furby delivery in time for Christmas.

Judy's persistence certainly paid off when she found out she was the lucky winner of a set of the must-have toys of Christmas 1998.

Just a few days before Christmas, Judy was making lunch for her kids when the good news came by telephone. Her response? "No, I don't believe this!" followed by an exhilarating "Hey, cool!"

As soon as she got the news, Judy called her Mom, sister and a few friends. "Then I thought, what if it was a hoax?!"

Her worries proved unfounded when her care package arrived by overnight Federal Express in the morning.

A stay-at-home mom of three little boys, Judy was well aware of the enormous press coverage that Furby was getting. She insists it hadn't really mattered to her children if they received a Furby for Christmas or not.

"I wasn't going to go wild standing in lines at four in the morning, although I might have bought one if I saw it for $30," she says.

As history played out, Judy would have to do no such thing.

A Special Christmas Gift

With prices skyrocketing on December Internet auction sites in excess of $125-150 each, Furby fever was making quite an impact on the American public. Newspaper and television news reports added fuel to an already hot fire. Parents and collectors alike were scrambling to locate this electronic talking wonder in time to wrap it and get it safely under their tree or for Hanukkah. Most people would feel fortunate to find just one Furby and now here was Judy with a half dozen of this famous toy!

Judy was faced with the dilemma of what to do with her prizes. After some consternation, it was decided that three of them would be Christmas gifts for her children, one for her sister's family, Judy would keep one for herself and the sixth would be saved for a special present someday.

Four-year-old Nicholas Zavattaro's smile was bright when he received his for Christmas. Dubbing his new gift "a talking Beanie," he plays with his for hours. Three-year-old Matthew likes to wake up his Furby and listen to the Furbish gibberish that ensues. Eighteen-month-old Brendon is oblivious to his new toy, which Mom put aside for him until he is old enough to understand it.

"I saved the one I liked best for myself," Judy confesses. The gray and pink Furby sits on her computer terminal as a constant reminder that if you don't enter a contest, you can't win.

"I have a lucky feeling," proclaims Judy. "I will enter lots of contests now!"

First Beanies, Now Furbys

Avid Beanie collectors, the Zavattaro family started collecting when their first son, Nicholas, was born in 1994. They proudly boast a collection of over 150 Beanies although they never really keep an accurate ongoing count. Judy's husband, Tom (like many Beanie husbands) just rolls his eyes and chuckles whenever the subject of Beanies comes up.

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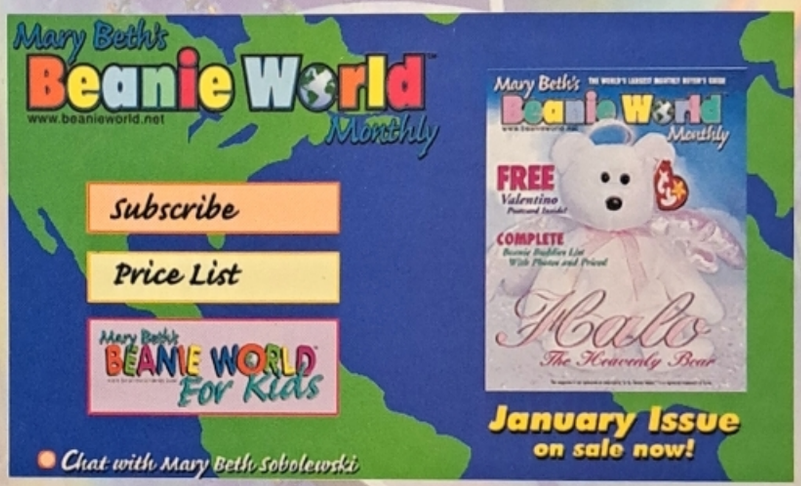

AOL users: beanieworld

Our Web site can now be found at keyword **beanieworld** on America OnLine. You never have to leave AOL! Featuring one chat room a month with Mary Beth and one with another Beanie expert.

ENTER: contests daily

Log on today and enter to win a set of **six Furbys** or the Presidential set of **Grateful Dead Bears!** Watch to win a bean bag toy every business day.

ORDER: cool stuff

Shop at *Beanie World* on our secure server. You can now purchase **T-shirts** and the limited-edition **hardcover anniversary issue** on our site.

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